

712 (4)
The Nature and Advantages of WELL-DOING,

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY,
LEICESTER,

ON EASTER-DAY, APRIL 8th, 1787.

For the Benefit of the CHARITY-SCHOOL,

LATELY INSTITUTED IN THAT PARISH.

Published at the request of the TRUSTEES.

By THOMAS LLOYD, A. B. K
Fellow of KING'S-COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

To which is added, an APPENDIX, containing an Account
of the Rise and present State of the CHARITY-SCHOOL.

L O N D O N:

Printed by C. WATTS, QUEEN-STREET, GROSVENOR-
SQUARE; and Sold at the Bookfellers, and at the CHARITY-
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TO THE
P A R I S H I O N E R S
O F
ST. MARY'S, LEICESTER,
TO THE
TRUSTEES OF THE CHARITY-SCHOOL,
AND TO ALL THE
SUBSCRIBERS TO THAT LAUDABLE INSTITUTION,
T H I S
S E R M O N,
PREACHED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT
O F T H E
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE POOR,

Is respectfully inscribed,

By their faithful friend,

And servant in the Gospel,

THOMAS LLOYD.

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TO THE

PARLIAMENTS

OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND OF IRELAND

AND TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE INSTITUTION



OF THE

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH FOR THE ENLIGHTENMENT

OF THE

KNOWLEDGE OF THE PEOPLE

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OF THE

AND SERVANT IN THE

THOMAS FLOYD

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S E R M O N, &c.

GALAT. VI. 9.

Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

IT requires but little knowledge of human nature, and of what passes daily under our observation in the moral world, to discern the propriety of the exhortation in my text, and the propriety also of applying it to the present occasion. For such is the strong tendency of the mind to evil, with such difficulty is this in any measure corrected, and so easily do we relapse into it, that it is common to see good resolutions broken, almost as soon as they are made; good plans laid aside, when they have been nearly brought into execution; and good institutions deserted, in the very infancy of their improvement and success.

BESIDES,

BESIDES, there is in man a great degree of levity and inconstancy, owing to the very fluctuating^{and} of his views and affections, which is very unfavourable, both to that general consistency of character, which he ought to preserve, and to the steady pursuit of any particular object; so that frequently his character and conduct are equally inexplicable, and not to be reduced to any certain determination. Hence arises that continual succession of new attachments, which diverts the minds of many from settling uniformly into any fixed habits and dispositions. Each day has its favourite scheme, or, if any one object should happily have influence enough to interest the heart more strongly, and to engage its more permanent affections, the ardour of desire excited generally exhausts itself in the first exertions; and, tho' it may have broken forth, even to a degree of Enthusiasm, whilst under lively impressions of the advantages in view, it gradually decreases, as these grow fainter, and at length quite dies away, when the novelty is worn off, and the benefits expected have been long under consideration.

SUCH, and so capricious, is the mind of man, and so hardly is it brought to pursue even its own devices, with any degree of constancy! What wonder then if, in God's ways, the difficulty be increased, and it be still more wavering and unsteady; since, in order to follow them, it must turn from its own, and be habitually denying its natural propensities.

WERE it not for the reasons above-mentioned, and did not experience prove the depravity, as well as inconstancy of man, the bad effects which these have upon the whole system of his conduct, and the

the very formidable opposition which they make to his perseverance in well-doing ; were it not, I say, for these truths, it would seem to us almost an unnecessary office to renew our application to you in this public manner, and to stand here, from year to year, as advocates for these poor children. After the many evidences of your good dispositions towards them, the repeated instances of your beneficence, and the marks of approbation, with which you have invariably regarded this institution, to recommend it again to your support and protection, might be thought little else, than to plead a cause, which you have already made your own, and of which you are the professed patrons. Yet is there nothing in the present frame of your minds, which accords with the observations I have made ? Your presence, indeed, on this occasion, seems to indicate the continuance of your favourable dispositions. But have they not lost any of their strength ? Is not their ardor at all abated ? Are they far removed from a state of cold indifference ? Perhaps some of you may be inclined to withhold your usual bounty. The trifling sum, which you contribute, may seem much to you, because you keep not, sufficiently, in view the important purposes for which it is given : or, your fashionable expences may be so great, that you scarce know how to spare it : or, some new scheme of benevolence may have supplanted this in your esteem : or, possibly, you may have taken up some hasty prejudices against us, in which you find yourselves willing to acquiesce, because they may serve to furnish you with a pretext for casting off the burden, of which you are now grown weary. Ah !
would

would prejudices so much prevail, were there not, in most cases, a readiness to entertain them !—It would be impossible to enumerate all the motives, which may operate in your breasts to the disadvantage of this Charity. You will do well to suspect them, and to consider, whether your objections do not proceed from something wrong in yourselves, rather than in it.

OTHERS of you, perhaps, tho' resolved to continue your contributions, may feel yourselves disposed to lessen them. You may think, that you have engaged too far in the undertaking ; that less assistance is now required, than before, when the plan was first brought into effect ; that the Foundling is now growing into maturity, and may, therefore, be left almost to itself. In short, you may form, I know not what, unwarrantable conjectures, all really proceeding from a moral indisposition to well-doing.

It is our duty, then, to meet whatever may be opposite to the interests of the poor children, to combat your prejudices, to remonstrate against your extravagances, which leave so little of your income for better purposes, to remove whatever false pleas may be urged for withholding the usual relief, to bring afresh to your mind the very important objects, which led you first to assist us, and, lastly, to excite and revive, as far as the divine blessing shall prosper our endeavours, your declining zeal.

BUT is this all, that it becomes us to do ? Far from it. We must not forget what manner of persons we profess to be. A Christian Minister, standing (as I do) before a Christian congregation, should,

should, and (if he know his office) will, be concerned, not merely that they should give, but that they should give in a Christian manner, and from Christian principles. He will be anxious, that they may reap the fruit of their own bounty, as well as the objects, for whom he solicits it. To this end he will remind them, in what way they must sow, and will press upon them the absolute necessity of keeping their hearts under the government of the rules, prescribed for them.

WERE we not, my Brethren, to pay a principal attention to this branch of our duty, we should be strangely inconsistent with the character we sustain; we should degenerate into mere Heathen Teachers, instead of being the Ambassadors of Christ, and act the very base and dangerous part of Traitors to our Lord, and of Deceivers to you. For "woe be unto us, if we preach not the Gospel,"—if we corrupt it with any false glosses and interpretations. Bear with us then, when, in order to deliver our own souls as well as your's, we strenuously insist on those peculiar motives, which characterize our religion, when we demand them of you, as essential to your salvation, and affectionately intreat you, either to seek them with earnestness, if you are not already possessed of them, or, if possessed of them, to hold them fast, as the very life of your souls.

The consideration of the text will naturally lead us to this mode of address, and is well adapted to answer every good end, that we can propose to ourselves in the present discourse. It will excite us to self-examination, whilst we observe

I. In the first place, what is the nature of that **WELL-DOING**, mentioned by St. Paul.— It will afford matter of correction, and instruction in righteousness, whilst we shew

II. The need of this exhortation, “not to be weary in well-doing.” And it will tend to animate and quicken the real Christian, whilst we set before you

III. Lastly, what encouragement is given to perseverance in well-doing; “for in due season we “shall reap, if we faint not.”— We cannot enlarge much on these various heads; but may the little, which shall be said, prove a word in season! may it “drop as the rain, and distil as the dew,” and answer all the gracious designs of our God of mercy!

I. Then, we enquire, what the **WELL-DOING** of our text is. And this is the more necessary, as many dangerous errors prevail concerning it. To obviate some of the most common mistakes, may be of great use.

It is not, then, mere almsgiving. This has, certainly, a very eminent place in the system of Christian Morality, but still it forms only a part. Yet, alas! is it not too plain, that some rest satisfied with it, as tho’ it were the whole of the duty enjoined upon them? Are there not, who evidently build, upon this foundation, all their pretensions to the esteem of their fellow-Creatures, and even to the favour of their Creator? With little or no regard to any other precepts, whilst they betray daily a Spirit of irreverence and profaneness towards God, and many wrong dispositions towards man, they set so unreasonable a value
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On their occasional acts of liberality, as to expect these will compensate for all defects, and make atonement for all transgressions. Vain and presumptuous expectation, to which nothing, but the most profound ignorance of all religion, could give birth!

NOR does well-doing consist in a more extensive observance of moral duties, considered simply in itself, and without any reference to higher motives. Prayer, public and private, a strict regard to truth and honesty, an uprightness of conduct, and spirit of benevolence are all necessary, but are not of themselves sufficient, to constitute a real excellence of character. They must proceed from a right habit of soul, from proper principles and dispositions, in order to entitle men to "the praise of them that do well." How little is this regarded in the general estimate which is made of human actions! In the judgment of the world, false appearances easily pass for realities; and even those, who reason justly about other things, are often very superficial and erroneous in their sentiments upon Christian morality. They either look not at all to the heart, or, at least, seem not to be sensible of the importance of those motives, which must lie at the root, as it were, of all good works,—of all that fruit, which is acceptable and well pleasing to God.

VARIOUS, and but too successful, are the moral impostures, whereby men deceive both themselves and others. To pursue them all thro' their subtle windings and intricacies, to detect and bring them to light, as foes to the best interests of mankind,

would be to bewilder myself in a labyrinth of perplexities.

PASSING by, then, every counterfeit show of well-doing, I proceed to declare what that is, which alone deserves the name, and which only is considered as such, by the great Searcher of hearts: and this is, "a course of right conduct formed upon Christian principles."—We all profess to be the disciples of Christ. This supposes us to have cordially received his truths, to be acquainted with his character, to have submitted ourselves to his rules; and to be actually experiencing the blessings of his salvation.

LET us see, then, what must be some of the grand features of our life, with respect both to sentiment and practice. This appears upon the very face of the Scriptures. There we find the most accurate representation both of our fallen estate by nature, and of the recovery provided for us by grace. Did Christ come "to save sinners, to seek that which was lost?" Then was our state most deplorable and alarming; and, if we are already partakers of his Redemption, we must have had a feeling conviction of our guilt and danger; we must have learnt the lesson of self-knowledge, where alone it is taught, at the feet of Jesus, and under the influences of his Spirit.

AGAIN, Is Christ "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;" the mighty Conqueror, that has subdued all our spiritual enemies? Here, then, upon his atonement and assistance alone, we build all our hopes of deliverance, both from the guilt and the power of sin. Does he tell us, that "they who believe in him
" shall

“shall be saved?” We conclude readily, with St. Paul, “that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law:” And yet we learn from St. James to distinguish between a living and a dead faith.

NOR are we at a loss to know, who this is, on whom we depend as our Redeemer, when we hear himself declare, that “He and the Father are one;” and when we see him introduced to us, by his beloved disciple, as the eternal “WORD,” in all the majesty of the Godhead.—“God manifest in the flesh,” and offering himself unto us under a variety of gracious characters and relations, is such a mystery of condescending love, as engages equally our admiration and confidence; so glorious to the divine Author of it, that we are sweetly constrained to serve and to praise him; and so admirably and exactly adapted to our Case, that there appears to be nothing, in the whole system of Redemption, either unimportant or unnecessary, no part of the great work, which might with safety be omitted, no office, sustained by our Lord, in which we do not gratefully receive him.

AND with regard to practical points, when we read that we must “deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow our Lord; that we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit; that we must do all things to the glory of God;” that the very intent of Christ’s giving himself for us was “to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;” and that precious promises are given to us, whereby we may derive strength for the performance of all these duties,

duties, and a delight in them ; it is our highest concern and most earnest desire to walk steadfastly in the path of these commandments, and to this end we are unwearied in our applications for increasing supplies of spiritual aid, in order that we may abound more and more in all the fruits of holiness. To be thus minded, thus conformed to the word and will of God, is not only an evidence that we have part in the blessings of the Gospel, but is itself also the prime and fundamental blessing, which the Gospel is intended to convey ; I mean, the blessing of "turning us away from our iniquities to the living God." Delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into a state of moral liberty, which consists in a freedom from the love of sin and of the world, we are now no longer strangers to the peace and joy of believing, to the sacred comforts of a divine intercourse, and the hope full of immortality, already partaking of the bliss of heaven.

SUCH is the slight sketch of our characters, provided we be sincere in our profession. Let us compare it with our lives, and see whether there be any resemblance ! A Christian is one, who has the Spirit of Christ within him. The good principle, from which his well-doing proceeds, is the love of his Lord ; and the extent of his well-doing comprehends the whole law of God. He is not partial in his observances, preferring one precept to another, but yields a willing and universal obedience. Nor is this merely superficial ; for he is careful to have his heart right with God. He, therefore, watches against his inward sins, and allows not a bad motive, any more than a bad action.

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It may not be unsuitable to the present occasion, to instance this in the duty of almsgiving, especially as the Apostle seems to make a peculiar reference to it in our text. The true Christian, then, contents not himself with being a steady friend to the poor, according to his ability, as tho' the bare act of relieving them were all that is required of him; but he is also concerned to administer this relief from proper dispositions. These he would constantly maintain, as well as his charitable acts; and he wishes ever to give, not as seeking any selfish end; not as forming the presumptuous expectation of thereby meriting any thing at God's hands, but as knowing himself to be only a Steward; as deeply sensible, that he is utterly unworthy of any mercies, as desirous to testify some sense of his vast obligations to God; and (to sum up all in one word) as doing it to Jesus, and expressing his love to his dear Redeemer, in the way which He has enjoined. Under these views and impressions, he regards not man, he courts not the approbation of others by an ostentatious display of liberality, but he looks to his God alone, and brings his free-will offering with cheerfulness.

FROM the above description of genuine Christianity, and of the influence which it has on every part of the conduct, judge ye, my Brethren, what ye know of it! but judge seriously and impartially, as in a matter of the highest importance! Let conscience do her office, and bear a true witness respecting you! Have you "so learned Christ," as to be really making him your "all in all?" or, are you strangers to his worth, and do you pay him nothing more than the customary reverence
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of formal worshippers? Consider your sentiments! In what light do you view yourselves and him? Consider your principles and practice! Are they such, as the Gospel requires? Examine, what dispositions you have brought with you to the duty before us. Are you led to contribute from Christian motives? or, does some very inferior, if not base, consideration weigh with you? Mere natural compassion, perhaps, may constrain, or the pride of generosity is to be gratified, or the horrid presumption of expecting to purchase God's favour may be harboured. Where this is the case, where there is reason to conclude that the power of Christianity has not reached the soul, let not a man flatter himself that he is among "them that do well," or that, like those, he shall hear the sentence of divine approbation, in the great day of accounts. Alas! far other will be his doom, unless he seek the Saviour, whom hitherto he has neglected. And is not this the awful state of many in this place? For (to omit others) what else can we possibly conclude respecting you, who, tho' rich, are not "rich unto God," who lead a life of gaiety and self-indulgence, being "lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God," and whose visits are, not to the sick beds of the poor, but to the giddy circles of fashionable dissipation? Should we call you the followers of the Holy Jesus, "whose meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him, who went about doing good, and left his people an example to follow his steps," the very striking opposition of character between you and Him would fully disprove our assertions; the palpable falsehood must at once appear,

appear, and the gross flattery could not but contradict itself. For are ye not "the children of this world?" Is not your conduct the conduct of them, who "have their portion in this life?" O! then, think me not "your enemy because I tell you the truth," neither think evil of the truth, because its report is against you! These are no peculiar notions of any sect or party, but the plain dictates of Christianity, and the express sentiments of our church. Do they seem severe? Blame not us,—blame not her;—but rather blame a corrupt heart, which cannot relish any thing opposite to its vicious inclinations. It is that, which makes you prone to object to, what you cannot refute. Religion is designed for the correction of an evil nature, but how can it obtain its end, unless admitted into the soul? If you obstinately continue to reject it, and prefer the disease to the remedy, we can only lament the dishonour you do to God, and the destruction you are bringing upon yourselves. O! be persuaded to try its influence, to acquaint yourselves with the Saviour, and to seek that delight in well-doing, which you have hitherto found in the gratifications of the flesh!

I have dwelt the more largely upon this head, as the subject is most important, and seemed to require it at my hands. But alas! it is not enough to understand clearly, what the nature of well-doing is. We may, nevertheless, be averse to it, and prone to turn from it.

We proceed, then, to consider

II. The need of the exhortation in our text, "let us not be weary in well-doing."

MAN is a degenerate creature. He has lost his original rectitude, and, of all the creatures which surround him, he alone has forgotten his proper part and duty. The planets move in their orbits; "the moon is appointed for certain seasons; the sun knoweth his going down;" but man has, as it were, started from his sphere, and counteracted the very end of his creation. Formed for the service of God, and the divine enjoyments of holiness, he yet prostitutes himself to mean, earthly gratifications, and, whilst he willingly follows the call of sense and appetite, he is utterly averse to those ways, in which he should walk. What, then, can be expected from such a creature, but either a continued course of ill conduct, or, if he should haply be induced to change his manners, at least a perpetual proneness to return to his old habits, and, in consequence of this, frequent relapses, much inconsistency of character, and, perhaps, at length a total departure into his former state? Propensities may be counteracted and over-ruled; but, when the restraint is withdrawn, they will again prevail. It is no wonder, therefore, even in moral cases, that the intemperate man often violates the rules of temperance, which he may have prescribed himself; that sloth enervates the vigor of the most determined diligence, and that covetousness restrains the hand of the most approved liberality. Much less, in spiritual things, are failures and miscarriages surprizing. For here, something more is aimed at, than the mere show of well-doing. Real advances are made towards it; so that sin takes the alarm, and exerts all its influence to prevent any further progress. Hence it

is that convictions so frequently terminate in indifference, and fail of their proper effect, and that the "goodness of many is as a morning cloud, and, like the early dew, it goeth away." Indeed, this will ever be the case, where there is not grace. But how great the injustice of concluding, as is commonly done, against all religion, because some high pretensions to it may come to nothing! You ought rather to lament the power of human depravity, than to think lightly of the Antidote provided for it.

NOR does the influence of an evil nature stop here; it is felt also by the Christian, and, tho' it cannot prevail to make him utterly cease from well-doing, it too often causes that weariness, against which the Apostle testifies in the text. Let not the character of the real Believer be mistaken! He neither is, nor professes himself to be, free from corruptions. He is not so changed as to have lost his nature. On the contrary, he finds it the most dangerous enemy he has to deal with; he alone sees its evil; he has frequent proofs of its inveterate enmity to God's ways; and therefore, (to use a scriptural expression) "he groans under it, being burdened." Others suffer themselves to be "borne away by their iniquities;" they flow down the torrent, and what wonder, then, that they know not its strength? But He resists, he sets himself to oppose every corrupt tendency; he denies himself; and can he, then, be insensible of the powers, which are exercised against him? When Christianity comes into the soul, it immediately causes a warfare. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." There

is no rest, no intermission ; and surely it is not improbable, that a soldier, so circumstanced, should grow weary.

FROM this general view of the matter, (for we cannot here enter into particulars) those should learn to correct their notions of true religion, who have been used to look upon it, as consisting only in a certain peculiarity of sentiment ; and those should learn to make allowances for the Christian, who are prone to condemn him, as an hypocrite, if he, perchance, be guilty of any the least deviation from the path of uprightness. But what should the Christian himself learn ? He should learn, situated as he is, increasing watchfulness and diligence : he should learn to " set God always " before him," to keep more close to the fountain, whence he must draw all his supplies, and to hold fast his principles steadfastly. For it is only, when he loses sight of them, when, in the sense of his own helplessness, he forgets " the help which " is laid for him upon one that is MIGHTY," that he feels much difficulty in maintaining his post, and following the commands of God.

WE all have our work appointed to us ; we have a race to run, a warfare to wage, enemies to conquer, and a course of well-doing to persevere in. Ah ! then, what wretched triflers are we ! Should we be thus negligent, thus inactive, under the eye of our great Master ! He sets us no such example. " Have we not known, have we not heard, that " the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of " the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is " weary ? " He is good, and ever doing good ; " and the effect of his incessant care fully appears
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in the preservation of that world, which he has formed, and in the perpetual support of the millions of his creatures.—Do we turn our eyes to the work of Redemption, and consider its divine Author? How arduous his purpose! how astonishing his undertaking! And yet, the Saviour did not shrink from it. He pursued his aim, whilst on earth, thro' the greatest possible obstructions, with the most steady magnanimity: he carried it into execution in his own person; he is still daily carrying it on in his members, nor will he cease from it, 'till he has brought it to its promised and perfect fulness of completion. So that He might justly say to us, (as to the Jews of old) "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

WHAT obvious instruction may you gather hence, as for other parts of your conduct, so especially for that, which becomes you on the present occasion! If you are to be "followers of God," and of your Saviour, then must you proceed with the charitable undertaking, which you have begun. You will not grow weary of it, but will consider yourselves bound to continue your patronage and support, and not to deceive the expectations, which are formed of you. Indeed, there are no stronger claims in nature, than those which may be urged in its behalf. For is it not your offspring, and has it not, therefore, a right to your parental care and affection? Brought into existence under your auspices, and preserved hitherto in that existence by your fostering hands, it naturally looks to you for the supply of all its wants; and conscious of no unworthiness, whereby your patronage has been forfeited, it makes increasing demands upon you,
without

without any fear of their being, either rejected as unreasonable, or complained of as encroachments on your kindness. Wonder not that its necessities are greater, than at first they were, and that at this time it solicits peculiar assistance. The reason will at once appear, if only the present state of the institution be adverted to.* You all, probably know, what it was in its rise, before it engaged so general notice, and from what slender beginnings it has grown gradually into its present form and enlargement. The erection of the building, and repeated additions to the numbers of children, were steps which could not have been taken, but in consequence of the very liberal encouragements, which have been from time to time afforded. Yet great as the encouragements have been, they have not entirely equalled the expences incurred, especially by building. Nor let this be objected to, as an act of imprudence. A desire to extend their plan of usefulness, and to place it upon the most respectable and permanent footing, were amongst other inducements that led the Patrons of the Charity to raise an Edifice, which is entirely adapted to carry on their benevolent design. Indeed the health of the children seemed to require it;—the convenience of the Teachers has been hereby consulted, and the attention of the public more engaged. Such a variety of important objects drew forth (as might be expected) their most active exertions; and if, in the pursuit of them, they may appear to have indulged somewhat of an

* See a more particular Account in the Appendix.

adventurous spirit, it is surely, in such circumstances, justifiable. They doubt not, that their proceeding approves itself to this assembly, and that, in the contributions of the present day, regard will be had to the deficiency already noticed.

WE carry, then, our arrears and our poverty to you; having no other fund, from which we can be supplied, than your liberality, we call upon you to shew, that we have not ventured too far upon the confidence of your aid; and we intreat you to proportion your bounty to our exigencies. Leave us not in such a state of weakness; forsake not the work of your own hands!

IN order to prevail upon you the more effectually to comply with our request, we observe

III. Lastly, what encouragement is given to perseverance in well-doing; "for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not."

ARE you a Christian, and "sowing to the Spirit?" Rejoice, then, in the glorious harvest promised you! Amidst all your trials and troubles, difficulties and perplexities, keep your eye fixed upon the end, and "have respect unto the recompence of the reward." Only forget not, that this reward is a reward of grace; and that the obedience, which you are now enabled thro' your Lord to perform, however acceptable, cannot merit it; but, for Redemption with all the blessings included in it, you are indebted to the free and unsolicited favour of your God, and to the gracious undertaking of his beloved Son: "you look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

THE reason of that spiritual weariness, which you too often experience, has been already assigned. The way to overcome it, is plain. For surely, you cannot allow yourself in it, when you consider what you shall reap in eternity. "To see Christ, as he is," to be made like unto him, to dwell for ever in his presence, and in the enjoyment of God;—these, these are prospects, which fill the soul with "a hope full of immortality," and which, in proportion as they are realized, cannot but animate the Believer both to do, and to suffer, the Lord's Will with cheerfulness.—Do you expect to hear that blessed sentence, "well done, thou good and faithful servant?" It follows, then, that you study to approve yourself such.

ARE you an heir of the heavenly kingdom? You cannot keep this in mind, without fearing to disgrace your high character.—Is a crown of righteousness laid up for you? In the view of this, you will be quickened to "fight the good fight of faith." Afflictions will sit easy, if you look to "the glory which shall be revealed:" and you will not decline in "your labour of love," whatever be the temptation which would draw you from it, whilst you are setting before you that seasonable and happy "rest, which remaineth." But still "you have need of patience, that, after "you have done the will of God, you might "receive the promise;" and your character is that of those, who, "by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality." Wait, then, the Lord's time, but wait in

in his ways. His time shall be found to be the best ; and "in due season" He will appear for you, and receive you to himself.

THUS powerful is the inducement to the Christian to abound in good works. Nor need he draw from futurity alone all his arguments for an holy diligence ; since he will reap here, as well as hereafter, the advantages of it. The time will not allow us either to mention them all, or to enlarge upon any of them particularly. Suffice it generally to observe, that, with respect to himself, he will obtain thereby a more-satisfactory evidence of the reality of his faith, a greater measure of spiritual prosperity, and an increasing delight in doing good ; and that, with respect to others, he will probably be the happy instrument of extensive good in his generation. "Happy surely is the man, that is "in such a case ; yea, blessed are they, who have "the Lord for their God ;" and who, under the constraining influence of Christ's love, are careful to maintain good works, and enabled "with well "doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish "men !"

WOULD to God, my Brethren, ye were all partakers of this blessedness ! But ah ! do not many "sow to the flesh," and will they not reap in a very different manner ? We must warn such not to expect any other than "corruption." God will deal with them according to their own principles. Their aims are selfish and worldly, and they shall reap accordingly. Do they exert their diligence in mere temporal things ? Nothing beyond temporal prosperity shall be the effect.—Do they perform their works "to be seen of men ? They have

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"their

"their reward," in the admiration which they obtain.—Is the good of society their grand and ultimate object in all their laudable undertakings? Society will approve, and they shall be honoured as good Citizens: but the approbation of God is out of the question. This they do not look for; and how, then, can they, with any justice, complain, if they should miss of it?

It seemed my duty thus to state the case plainly before you, that you may all see, according to your respective characters, what fruits you may expect from your conduct.—It remains only for me to shew, that, whatever be your views and principles in doing good, this Charity, to which I call you to contribute, cannot but answer your designs, and, therefore, most strongly recommends itself to your warmest encouragement.

ALL, however they may differ in other respects, agree at least in this, that to relieve the poor is a duty of much importance; and that the best mode of relief is that, which shall correct their immoralities, and instruct their ignorance, whilst at the same time it provides for their bodily necessities. The advantages also of religious education are generally allowed, tho' (we fear) but little understood. To enlarge on these topics in the present day, when they seem to be universally acknowledged, and when Charity-Schools and Sunday-Schools are established in almost every place, would be to pursue an argument, which has already been exhausted.

LET us apply, then, what has been said, to the institution before us. In this seminary of religious instruction much good seed has been
already

already sown. The principles of the Christian Religion are explained and inculcated, not (as some have presumed) in a partial and disingenuous way, and with a view to support a favourite system, but honestly and conscientiously, as in the sight of God, and with a desire to deliver his sacred truths, in their undisguised simplicity and obvious import.——The interests of Morality are also very carefully consulted; nor is there any room to object, that, in an attention to doctrine, practice, the great end to which religion leads, is overlooked. It is indeed principally respected in this school; for scriptural knowledge is cultivated with no other design, than to draw from it those various motives, which are essential to all true well-doing; and the motives, thus derived, are urged forcibly upon the conscience, and commended to the heart: so that morality, instead of being separated from Christianity, is built upon it, as upon its proper basis, and has a far greater probability of success, than mere philosophy could give it. Together with this regard to manners, which are certainly the first object in forming a good citizen, regard is also had to such endowments and qualifications, as may be of general use for the purposes of business, and great pains are bestowed on the cultivation of the understanding, in those more common attainments, which suit a low station.—We should omit to mention the cloathing, which is provided, as being a very inferior consideration, were it not the chief article of expence, tho' the least of importance.

WHAT, then, may we expect to reap? This is an enquiry, which the sower very naturally makes, which you, therefore, may propose; and surely

the answer will be to your satisfaction. Are you concerned for the souls of the children? Then it must be matter of joy to you, to see them trained up in the fear of God, and brought into an acquaintance with his word, "which is able to make them wise unto salvation." You may form the reasonable and delightful expectation, that, in supporting this charity, you shall "gather fruit unto eternal life." And what a prospect is this! How noble, how animating! It was to save souls, that Christ descended from heaven, that the Apostles sustained the persecutions of an opposing world; and wherein consists either your resemblance to Him, or your imitation of them, if you grudge your most liberal support to a cause, in which so much has been already done and suffered?—Are you desirous, that the children should become worthy members of our Church? Such, with the divine blessing, they will be; for they will have no other principles enforced upon them, than what she teaches.—Is it your object, that they should prove useful members of society? What way so likely to effect this, as to prevent early habits of idleness, which many of them would otherwise contract,—to qualify them for a better and more skilful discharge of their part in life, than could possibly be expected from them, were they to remain in a state of total ignorance,—and to impress them with a deep sense of the moral obligations, which lie upon them? But what moral obligations will they attend to, if they be left wholly under the influence of those bad examples, which they observe around them, not only in those of their own age and situation, but (alas!

may

we not add?) too frequently in their parents themselves?

THE present very corrupt state of the poor is truly alarming, and the more so, since, from the natural course of things, nothing is to be expected but an increase of depravity. It is confessed that the Legislature actively opposes itself to the growing evil. But what is the effect? What does it, with all the exertions of its Magistracy, all the necessary severities of its penal inflictions? It may indeed dismember society, in order to preserve its interests; it may depopulate, in order to purify our country. Yet this remedy, how desperate, how little preferable to the disease! To see Justice (as we have long seen her) unsheathing the sword of vengeance against multitudes of our fellow-citizens, dealing deaths around, and destroying almost as largely as war itself does, is a scene truly distressing. But when we further observe, that these "destructions are not come to an end;" that, tho' offenders are cut off, offences still abound; that ~~the~~ outrages and enormities, however pursued and punished, seem evidently to be gaining ground upon us, and to be multiplied by the very means, taken to suppress them; and, in short, that the determinate opposition, made to transgressors, only serves to increase their numbers and audacity, as tho' it were a point of honour among them to become Martyrs in the cause of villainy, and a piece of profligate heroism to rush upon certain death;—what, I say, should the observation of these melancholy facts produce in us, but the strongest emotions of compassion and fear, indignation and zeal? If there be any benevolence towards
man,

man, any regard to God, any abhorrence of sin, and desire to restrain it, nay, any common concern for our personal safety, who amongst us can be an indifferent spectator of these awful scenes, which too plainly indicate that we are hastening "to fill up the measure of our national iniquities?" Who amongst us does not anxiously enquire, what may be done, at so dangerous a crisis, to secure our persons and property from the hand of lawless rapine and wanton cruelty, and (which is of far greater moment) to put a stop to such crying provocations of divine vengeance? Where is the man, who can look upon these things with a cold and distant kind of concern, who sees no necessity for any endeavours of reformation, and feels no desire to join in them?

BLESSED be God, that a different spirit is gone forth into most parts of the kingdom, that a general alarm has been excited, and, in consequence of this alarm, the present plan of religious instruction has so greatly obtained. It is an event of the first importance, which, tho' it may make no splendid figure in the annals of our nation, will ever be considered by all, who seriously examine it, as the happiest in its design and tendency, and the most honourable to the age, in which we live. That such is the light, in which it now appears to men of thought and reflexion, nay, even to the more common observer, may be easily collected from that public approbation and patronage, into which an attention to the children of the poor is received. Wisdom and piety have come to the aid of the Legislature; and whilst the former has been engaged

gaged in planning the most judicious mode of attack upon sin, the latter assists readily to bring it into effect, and consoles herself, for the flagrant impieties of the present day, with the delightful and animating prospect of a better generation.

BUT is there no cure of more immediate efficacy provided? Can nothing be done for them, who are already grown up in wickedness? Here indeed a severer discipline is required, and it is to be wished, that this may be as general as the milder one of an early education. For were those lesser immoralities, to which the law extends, diligently searched out, and brought under the cognizance of the Magistrate; was sin thus resisted in its very first sallies of open profligacy, whilst yet capable of shame and dismay, it would, probably, shrink abashed from the public eye, and its further progress would be effectually stopped. The offender would, in many instances, reform his conduct, and become a regular Citizen; whereas impunity serves only to confirm and encourage wickedness, and to ripen the victim for the stroke of Justice. See, then, another way, wherein the humanity of the age may shew itself! If it be no less an object to remedy present, than to prevent future evils, (and who does not perceive that the reasons, which operate to the one effect, operate still more forcibly towards the other?) Sin must be opposed in its advanced, as well as infant state, and must suffer punishment, where it will not yield to instruction. This is no time for a partial reformation. Be it universal; be it exerted against every species of iniquity, which prevails throughout the land. So may we

hope,

hope, that when our God visits, he will visit in mercy, rather than in judgment.*

I need make no apology for a digression to which my subject naturally led me; nor will you be displeased with it, provided you are properly affected by the melancholy, yet faithful, account, which has been given, of our corrupt populace. But I had some further design in it, than merely to gratify our common feelings. It will serve to better purpose, if it tend to animate them, who have influence amongst us, to watch over the manners of this place, and to exert themselves for the suppression of

vice,
to * In some places (to their honour be it spoken!) these considerations have already had their proper influence: Societies have been formed, for the express purpose of restraining vice and profaneness, and the principal Inhabitants have united their most vigorous exertions, to bring under the animadversion of the Magistrate those criminal practices, which the Law condemns.—One consequence of this excellent scheme is, that the difficulty of detecting offenders is lessened, and the unjust censure, usually affixed to an active prosecution of them, removed. The importance of such an effect will be readily acknowledged by them, who have observed the too common complexion even of pious men: how unwilling they are to do that species of good, which requires exertions, (especially, when these are to be made in a way painful to themselves, invidious to the persons whose benefit they seek, and obnoxious to many wrong imputations) and how far that unwillingness tends to the suppression of their zeal.—Many other good consequences might be enumerated; but we need not indulge speculation, when we can appeal to matter of fact. The advantages of the plan, as they already appear in those places, where it hath obtained, form the strongest recommendation of it. Why, then, is it so little adopted? What means that general expression of concern about the manners of the poor, if, at the same time, such an effectual method of correcting them be neglected?

And

vice, as those, who have the interests of religion and their country at heart, and who regard the voice of their God and of their Sovereign,* which equally call them to the duty, we would recommend.

ANOTHER use of this digression may be to convince them, who see not the importance of educating the children of the poor, that there now exists a most pressing necessity for such a measure; and it may likewise shew you, who are well-disposed towards us, that, in contributing to our School, you do not merely promote the private plan of a few individuals, but that you may consider yourselves as embarked in a public cause, wherein you

And how inconsistent is it with that humanity, for which we value ourselves, to suffer transgressors to proceed unmolested in their evil courses, 'till the law take cognizance of them, not in the way of salutary discipline and restraint, but of vengeance and destruction!—What hinders, but that so good an example may be followed amongst ourselves, and that a similar union of power and influence may take place here, for the same purposes? It were needless surely to observe, that the open offences, which we may see committed daily against the law of God and the Land, not only justify, but even demand, the expedient proposed. That it may not be rejected as new and unprecedented, the reader is referred to a late excellent publication, containing an account of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in the last Century, together with a copy of the rules entered into by the Huddersfield Association. This pamphlet, which deserves an attentive perusal, may be had, together with this Sermon, at the Booksellers, and at the Charity School, in *Leicester*, Price 6d.

* The King's late proclamation is here alluded to, and that this has not been issued out as a mere matter of form, or only a customary thing, is evident from the letters sent by the Secretary of State to the Sheriffs of the different Counties:

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have the concurrence and approbation of almost all the respectable characters in the whole nation. And will not your zeal be quickened, and your concern for the interests of morality increased, when you see, that you are joining in a general endeavour, to assist the Legislature, preserve the Kingdom from utter ruin, and avert the divine wrath, whilst, at the same time, you take the best means to plant a good neighbourhood around yourselves, which may ultimately conduce much to your own comfort and security !

It were endless to recount all the probable benefits of the institution before us. But let it be remembered, that they are not of such a nature, that they will at once shew themselves, in the highest degree. They are not such, as make a great parade, and then pass away ; but they are lasting ; they will increase gradually, and be more and more extensively felt, as the objects of your bounty come into active life, and fill up their respective relations therein. Thus "in due season you will reap" the fruits of your liberality. This, however, will be, "if you faint not," in consequence of the weariness already considered ; if you cast not off your care of us.

"BEHOLD, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." With what advantage may this example be urged upon you, should your impatience make it necessary, or should any of you be discouraged in this work of charity, from having formed sanguine expectations, which are not yet fully answered ! For if He commit the seed to the ground, in a dependence

dependence upon the God of Providence to restore it to him with an abundant increase, does it not also become you to "go and do likewise?" You should sow in hope, and spare no labour,—no prayers for the divine blessing on your labour; especially when you reflect upon the vast difference of the objects. For "if the fruit of the earth be precious," how much more precious that, to which you have respect! Estimate the worth of one soul, or the evil of one sin; trace the bad effects of one sinful action, thro' all the long train of its possible consequences, as it may affect not only the individual himself, but his connections also, and society at large; and when you can do this, you will have some adequate conception of the importance of religious instruction.—Surely, then, nothing more need be added to the advantages above described, to secure the continuance, nay, the increase of your benefactions.

BUT let God arise, and plead his own cause! To him has this institution been dedicated; on him, as its great support, does it depend;—and O! that he may now open all your hearts, both to give liberally on this occasion, and also to receive at his hands the unspeakable gift of his love, Jesus Christ the righteous; To whom, with himself and and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed equal honour, praise, and adoration, world without end! **AMEN.**

A P P E N D I X.

Containing an ACCOUNT of the Rise and present State
OF THE
CHARITY-SCHOOL.

IN the year 1780, several of the inhabitants of St. MARY's Parish, LEICESTER, lamenting the extremely corrupt state of their poor; and desirous to check the increase of this dangerous evil, opened a subscription to promote the religious education of the poor children. The proposal was generally approved: many respectable persons immediately gave in their names, as Subscribers: a Schoolmaster, of good character and abilities, was appointed; and a School was opened, in a house hired for the purpose.

In every succeeding year the Subscriptions have been gradually increasing, and, in proportion to this increase, the School has received various degrees of enlargement. At the first opening, fifty children were admitted; and, in the year following, five more were added to the number.

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THE cloathing of the children formed no part of the original plan. But, in the year 1781, it was thought that a plain uniform for the children would render this Charity more respectable, and be a considerable relief to the indigent parents. An additional Subscription was, therefore, set on foot for this purpose; and the children have been accordingly cloathed, in the most frugal manner, every Easter.

MANY inconveniencies were found to arise from the closeness of the room, in which the School was taught for four years. It was prejudicial to the health both of the children and the teachers; nor was it possible, in such a situation, to carry this charity to any further extent. In the year 1784, therefore, it was proposed to erect a building, entirely adapted to the purposes of the school, which might give opportunity for the further enlargement of it, and place it upon a more permanent foundation. The plan was laid before the public, and has been supported in the most liberal manner.

A piece of ground was purchased, in the centre of the parish, not far from the Church, and in a retired, airy situation: In 1785, the proposed building was erected, and is found to be most convenient for the design. It contains two separate Schools, and a house for the Teachers. This has enabled the Governors to add considerably to the number of the Scholars, tho' not without an increase of their annual expences, in confidence of continued support from the liberality of the public. In 1786, a Mistress was appointed for the management of the upper School, in which the Girls are placed, and for the express purpose of instructing them in plain needle-work; and, upon this appointment, TWENTY-FIVE additional scholars were admitted, so that not less than EIGHTY are now taught in this Seminary.

THE building, tho' most convenient, has been erected upon the most frugal plan, as the finances of the Charity required. But it has lately received a considerable ornament, two elegant Figures being placed in Niches
over

over the entrance in the front of the building, for which the Charity is indebted to two liberal Benefactors in London.*

To render the situation more healthful, two tenements, in the front of the School, have been pulled down, and the ground much improved and laid out in a pleasing manner. This has increased the expence, but has given general satisfaction.

THE property of the School is vested, by deed of trust, in sixteen Gentlemen, inhabitants of the Parish, and the deed was enrolled in His Majesty's High-Court of Chancery, August 1, 1785.

IT will not be wondered at, that a large expence has been incurred; somewhat exceeding the benefactions which have been received. A debt of nearly 100*l.* was contracted, to finish the design; but, by the liberal collection made at the preaching of this sermon, the debt has been considerably lessened; nor is it doubted, but that, by the kind exertions of the friends of this Charity, the whole will be soon discharged, and that the institution will continue to be supported, upon the most extensive plan.

HERE, then, it is proposed to receive the children of the poor, and to supply in their education, what their parents either cannot, or will not, give them. The grand design is, not to teach them what is unsuitable to their situation, or to take them out of their proper sphere, but to fit them for acting their part well, in that line of life, in which they are placed; and this too, with a particular regard to their eternal existence, which they are here taught to prepare for; as much pains are taken to instil into their minds the principles of our holy religion, from a desire to have them good Christians, as well as good Citizens.

THE Boys are taught reading, writing, and the four first rules of Arithmetic. The Girls are instructed in

* John Johnson—and John Horton, Esquires.

reading and sewing; they make the Boys shirts, their own shifts, caps, tippets, aprons, &c; and any other plain work, for the benefit of the Charity: and they are all regularly catechised by the Minister, as well as by the Teacher.

ALL things necessary for their education are provided for them; nor are their Parents put to any expence for fire, books, paper, pens, ink, &c; and each child, upon its dismissal from the School, is presented with a Bible and a Prayer-book.

THE government of this Charity is in the hands of all the annual Subscribers, who, if they chuse it, have also the power of nominating a Scholar, in their turn, for each Subscription of half a Guinea per Annum, and so on in proportion. A monthly Committee is held at the School, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon of the first Monday in every month, for the examination of the conduct of the Scholars, and for the filling up of any vacancies, which may be made. On Easter-Sunday the children appear in their new cloaths; when a Sermon is preached, and a collection made for the benefit of this institution. On Easter-Tuesday, in the forenoon, a general meeting of all the Subscribers is held, the state and management of the School are enquired into, the accounts for the year are passed, and any necessary regulations made.

It were easy to point out the great need and vast probable advantages of this Charity; one proof of which must be observed, viz. the multitude of applications, which are made, and the great importunity, which is used by the poor, to obtain admission for their children.

The Governors have from time to time, with great pleasure, observed the good discipline maintained in the School, and the improvement of the Scholars in their learning; and they hope that the benefits of this institution, while they are felt by the poor, will be so manifest, as to recommend it to general notice and approbation.

A general abstract of the Accounts from the opening of the School, Oct. 2, 1780 to Easter, 1787,

RECEIPTS.

Subscriptions and Benefactions to the general design of this Charity,	l.	s.	d.
452 13 0			
Collections at the Church from nine Charity Sermons	l.	s.	d.
214 7 1 $\frac{1}{4}$			
Part of the Collections at the Sacrament for the last seven years	l.	s.	d.
69 13 6			
Subscriptions towards the building	l.	s.	d.
268 2 4 $\frac{1}{2}$			
A debt yet undischarged	l.	s.	d.
48 1 0			
£. 1052 17 0			

PAYMENTS.

The Master's Salary at 25l. per Ann. for six years and a half	l.	s.	d.
162 10 0			
Rent of his house, 4 years and a half	l.	s.	d.
22 10 0			
Gratuities to the Teachers	l.	s.	d.
18 18 0			
Mistress for the upper School at 3s. per week, 37 weeks	l.	s.	d.
5 11 0			
Books, paper, ink, &c. printing, and advertising	l.	s.	d.
35 1 0			
Desks, forms, &c.	l.	s.	d.
4 4 9			
Coals and firing	l.	s.	d.
8 15 8			
Cloathing	l.	s.	d.
23 1 6			
Other articles not reducible to any general head	l.	s.	d.
4 8 3 $\frac{1}{4}$			

For the NEW BUILDING.

The erection of the school and house, the improvement of the ground, various alterations, furniture, &c. &c.	l.	s.	d.
444 19 4 $\frac{1}{2}$			
Purchase of the ground	l.	s.	d.
34 1 5			
Purchase of two tenements, and of the lease of the garden in the front of the school	l.	s.	d.
57 7 0			
Balance in the Treasurer's hands, for the expences of the present year	l.	s.	d.
23 9 0			

£. 1052 17 0

Form

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Form of leaving a LEGACY to the
CHARITY-SCHOOL.

*"I give and bequeath unto A. B. and C. D.
the sum of _____ upon trust, that
they pay the same to the Treasurer of a Society, who
call themselves "The Trustees and Governors of
"the Charity-School of St. Mary's, Leicester,"
which sum I charge on my personal estate, and
desire it may be applied to the charitable uses of the
said School, for which, on payment, the Treasurer's
receipt shall be a sufficient discharge."*

No children can be admitted into this School under
SEVEN years old ; nor can any be continued in it, who
are not regular in their attendance, and orderly in their
conduct.

F I N I S

Form of Living a LEGACY to the

CHARLES - SCHNORR

It is the duty of the Government to provide for the education of the poor, and to this end it is necessary that the Government should be able to raise money in the most efficient manner. The Government has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the sum of £1000 from the Hon. the Secretary of the Treasury, and to express its appreciation of the same. The Government has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the sum of £1000 from the Hon. the Secretary of the Treasury, and to express its appreciation of the same.

Two children were admitted into this school under
several years old; not only were commended in it, who
were not in their attendance, but only in their

6-1-11